

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. **W**Hether Angels may be properly said to move?

Answer. The Learned Aquinas has taken a great deal of pains in the discussion of this point, distinguishing between a continued & an uncontinued Motion; but neither he nor any other Philosopher can prove, that any Angel, Soul or Spirit can be said to move properly: that they are sometimes in this place, and sometime in that, is certain, and 'tis no more than an act of our own Minds, we can think of Rome, Geneva, West-Indies and then the East, without locally passing over the Medium or Interjacent places, but 'tis necessary, that in Motion which can be truly said to be proper, that they must also be continuous and measure place all the way: but Angels not being Matter, cannot measure place otherwise than by Virtual Contact.

Quest. Whether those that live in Hatred, Envy and Malice, when they say the Lords Prayer, do not in a manner Curse themselves, and whether 'tis fit for 'em to pray over that Prayer either in Publick or in Private?

Answer. Yes, 'tis a Cursing themselves, but if the words (as some wou'd expound them) shou'd be taken in a milder sence, Viz. Forgive us our Trespases and give us Grace to forgive them that Trespas against us. Even in this sence so long as they forgive not others, 'tis a Sin, and we are expressly told elsewhere, that we shall not be forgiven, if we forgive not.

Quest. Whether our Modern Ladies dresses and high Topknots are not an infallible sign, of their going to their old Father of Pride, the Devil, without Repentance and Reformation?

Answer. I am afraid the Querist is a little too uncharitable, not considering the Customs of Nations, the Differences of Implies Birth and many more Exceptions which mightily alter the Case; God forbid we shou'd be so wicked as to Plead for Pride, or so foolish as to charge all Persons (as in the Question) as fit Subjects of it. Pride lyes in the heart and not in the dress, the last is an Effect of the first; if it lay in the dress, then all people equally dress'd wou'd be equally proud, and upon the same Argument, an Ape dress'd in Boys Apparell wou'd be a Boy, when 'tis an Ape still. 'Tis a great Sin and Error, that the levity and vanity of Servants shou'd aspire to an equality of dress with those that Command: As the Law of God has commanded a distinction in Habits betwixt Male and Female; So the same Law condemns Excess of Apparell in both, yet he allows a difference according to the places of Persons, those that are in Kings Courts wear soft Raiment (says our Saviour) Dives was not condemn'd because he fared deliciously, and weared sumptuous Apparell, but because in his Prosperity, he out

of an uncharitable Pride, neglected poor Lazarus at his Gate. 'Tis Pride and Singularity in the Quakers to affect a different dress from the World. 'Tis Pride to be in the extremity of Fashions; but to conform modestly to all Fashions is Necessary and Prudent, unless at the same time we deny our selves the Converse of the World, and joyn with Anchorites or Brutes. We are no where in the Scripture forbid or commanded to wear such or such a dress, God Almighty has left such indifferent things to the Custom of Nations and the Prudence of the Age; Every one ought to conform to the Practice of the Age he or she lives in; but at the same time, wisely and prudently to consider the station that God Almighty has put 'em in, to live above that is an Indication of a Proud heart, and to live under that, is an Argument of sordid Covetousness; an humble heart secures us to God and our Conscience, and a distinct regular Judgment keeps unoffensive to the wiser part of the World.

Quest. Whether 'tis not time to send out a Hue and Cry after the lost Practice of Christianity, &c.

Answer. This Question is of the same thread with the two former, and we cou'd heartily wish there was as much Judgment as there is a seeming Zeal in all of 'em (for we are charg'd as we will answer it to God that they be all Printed) and we have comply'd, mostly out of Pity. Our Answer to this last is, That there is a Hue and Cry out, (as the Querist styles it) already; and we think the plainest Ministers fittest for such an Auditor as our Querist, to perswade him of it, and we hope that many, tho' differently qualified are going on Effectually with such a good Work, but to expect a thorow Reformation in this Age is too charitable a thought, and if so, the same Question may be always in vain urged.

Quest. My Education was chiefly at Cambridge, where I continued five Years, in all which time I was not so industrious how to ply my Studies as to keep Company, especially at drinking Bouts; since my leaving the University (which has been two Years) I have continued under the same Method, which I am sensible has brought me upon the Confines of a Fever, as by several light Symptoms I have reason to fear, particularly a vast quantity of white scurr upon my Tongue, which is supposed to proceed from the immoderate heat of the Blood: However I find no inward signs of it. My Age is 24, my Constitution indifferently hearty (especially when I neglect Drinking). I am by Nature very Cholerick and Passionate, I sleep little, but when I do, I am extremely troubled with horrid Dreams, which puts me upon Vows of Repentance, but they soon vanish when the Day and my old Acquaintance appears; Yet I am (without Vanity) naturally of a good Disposition and very inclinable to Piety; I desire to know

your

your Opinion in this Case, whether you think upon my forsaking Drinking, I may avoid the Fever that visibly threatens me? If not, how long you Imagine it will be ere it comes, and how I ought to behave my self in the Interim? And lastly, what may be the Cause of these terrible Dreams, and what Effects ought they to have upon me?

Ans. The best Receipt against Impiety, an impending Fever, and terrible Dreams, is to throw off all your old Companions, and lead such a life as may not be a Scandal to your Cloth; if you do not, all these Warnings, together with your Education will appear in Judgment against you; Read the Life of Mr. Fulks—and you will exactly read your own, and we hope a due Reflection may secure you from a parallel Exit.

Quest. Whether a Man in a regenerate state commits Sin?

Ans. Yes, but not to make a habit on it; when he falls he rises, and takes the greater care of falling again.

Quest. Doctor Brown in his Religio Medici, P. 150. says, He hopes he doth not break the Commandment if he loves his Friend before the dearest of his Blood, even those to whom he owes the Principle of Life; and immediately after, he never cast a true Affection upon a Woman, but he has lov'd his Friend as he does Vertue, his Soul, his God. I pray your Thoughts upon both, the former seeming too far an Extent of acquir'd Friendship, and the latter an Oblivion of his Mother?

Ans. Dr. Brown has throughout that Book shew'd such a great Spirit, solid Judgment and evenness of Temper, that he has at least deserv'd Sir Kenelm Digby's Encomium. But to the Question, we think his Choice of Friendship very laudable, where he says he loves his Friend as his Vertue, his Soul, his God, 'tis a bold stroke, a little too bold amongst such as do not understand what true Friendship is, amongst such as do understand, we think him not to blame; he says he loves his Friend as his God, not as much as his God, that is, he loves his Friend with a love of the same Nature as he loves his God. What are we to think of these words, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*. This Text does not enjoin us to love our Neighbour as much as our selves, but freely, sincerely, &c. as we love our selves. True Friendship is only fixt upon Vertue, which is only an Emanation or Ray of the Divine Original; so that by loving a vertuous Friend, 'tis in Effect a loving of God; so that to say, *I love my Friend as I love my God*, is no more than to say, *I love God*; or to say, *I love one part of the Divine Communications as sincerely as I do the whole*, but not as extensively; But I cannot excuse the Dr. for saying he never cast a true affection upon a Woman, for doubtless there's no Sexes in Souls, and the Soul of a Woman may be as great and vertuous as that of a Man, but perhaps he was afraid of Con- versing with Womans Soul, because he was afraid of a Feminine Body—having in another

place of his Religio Medici declared, that he could be content that Mankind shou'd Procreate like Trees.

Quest. I have formerly addicted my self to a most Grievous Sin, and tho' I have for some considerable time by (the Grace of God) refrain'd from the Commission of it, and have a great abhorrence and reluctance, at the least thought of it when I am awake and have the use of my Reason, yet notwithstanding in my Dreams I seem to commit it, and to take a pleasure in the Commission of it, I desire you wou'd give me your Opinion in the Case, whether I yet sin or no, and if I do, what course I may take to break my self of such Idle wicked Dreams which unwillingly and unwittingly I am subject to?

Ans. Quarles was of opinion that he that Dreamt he committed a Sin, 'twas the same as if he really did it.—But we are of another Opinion, and we hope for very good Reasons; for tho' we shan't deny but that all the Thoughts, Words, Actions, and every thing else that proceed from ill Men are ill, as proceeding from such Persons, and therefore their Dreams (where they are agreeable to their Practices) are wicked, because all the Powers of their Soul with their Imagination (which is the Parent of Dreams) are equally depraved; but 'tis not so in other Persons whose Wills and Practices agree not with their Dreams. Involuntary Motions are not wicked, because not to be avoided, and what cannot be avoided is no Sin; for if any thing were enjoin'd us that's impracticable, it wou'd be Injustice in the Lawgiver, and the Judge of all the Earth cannot but do Right. We believe the Querists dreams chiefly arise from his Temper, and not from an habit, because the habit is broke off, and because other Persons that have never made the least Progress in such habits have come under the very same Circumstances.

Quest. What is the reason of, and when began that Custom of changing the Popes Name at his Inauguration.

Ans. Until the time of Constantine the Great (who gave so much Goods and Privileges to the Church of Rome, the Sovereign Bishops had been all Martyred, insomuch that there was no Sueing for the Promotion of the Papal Chair; but those that undertook that Charge, were constrain'd by force or request to accept thereof. Pope Gregory the Fourth being Dead in the Year Eight hundred forty two, they chose for the Sovereign Bishop of Rome a Roman of Noble Blood, Illustrious Education, but of a harsh Name, viz. Hogsface, Therefore because this Name seemed to him disagreeable to such a Holy Function, and remembering that our Saviour changed the Name of St. Peter, he also changed his Name & called himself Sergius, which was his Father's name, from thence came the Custom observed to this day, that he who is chosen Pope may at his pleasure take what Name pleases him best; And tho' they change their Names, they keep this Custom to take the Name of some one of their Predecessors. See Platinus, Eusebius, &c.